wings, a blue-backed gull, and a curlew. The plovers are often seen with the buzzard sitting in the midst of them, showing no signs of caution or apprehension, but seem as if they were listening to a lecture delivered by him. The gull frequently retires into the garden-house, probably to enjoy the society of the buzzard. The garden is not the garden of Eden, and yet these birds, of different natures, habits and dispositions, appear to live in perfect harmony, peace and good fellowship with each other. G. J. F.

Newton-by-the-Sea, Aug. 29, 1845.

P.S.—I have had three living specimens of the Honey Buzzard in my possession, not one of them in plumage at all resembling the other. One of the three never could be induced to take any food, and after living about a fortnight, died, I believe, from pure inanition. Besides the plaintive cry above-mentioned, the Honey Buzzard has another and more varied note apparently of alarm.—*From the Transactions of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club*, vol. ii. p. 173.

LARUS EBURNEUS.

On Monday last Michael Roberts of Penzance, who devotes a considerable portion of his time and attention to the subject of ornithology, succeeded in shooting, off the pier head, a very excellent specimen of the ivory gull (*Larus eburneus*). We believe that the first specimen of this species obtained in the United Kingdom was at Balta Sound, Shetland Islands, in the winter of 1822. The length of these birds varies from 16 to 18 inches, depending upon age and sex. Captains Sabine and J. C. Ross represent this species as common on the coast of Greenland, Davis' Straits, Baffin's Bay, Port Bowen and Hecla Cove. Dr. Richardson mentions these birds as having been seen breeding in great numbers in the high perforated cliffs which form the extremity of Cape Parry, in lat. 70°.—*Cornwall Royal Gazette.*

FOSSIL HUMAN BONES.

At a Meeting of the Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia (Oct. 6, 1846), Dr. Dickeson exhibited a large and remarkably varied series of fossil bones, obtained by him from the vicinity of Natchez, Miss. The collection embraces the entire head and half of the lower jaw of the *Megalonyx Jeffersoni* *, now for the first time discovered; together with many parts of the skeleton, and indeed of several skeletons of that animal, sufficient to enable its complete osteological reconstruction. The stratum that contains these organic remains is a tenacious blue clay that underlies the diluvial drift east of Natchez, and which diluvial deposit abounds in bones and teeth of the *Mastodon giganteum.*

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* Dr. Dickeson originally suggested, from partial comparisons, that this cranium belonged to the *Megalonyx*, and not to the *Mylodon* as others had supposed; his opinion was fully confirmed by M. Agassiz on a recent examination; and this distinguished naturalist has proved the *Megalonyx laqueatus* of Harlan to belong, not to *Megalonyx*, but to some other nearly allied genus.

The animals associated with the Megalonyx are, an Ursus, a Bos, two species of Cervus, one or two species of Equus, and several undetermined genera, all which are now in progress of delineation and description for the Academy's Journal.

Dr. Dickeson presented another relic of yet greater interest, viz. the fossil *os innominatum* of the human subject taken from the abovementioned stratum of blue clay, and about two feet below the skeletons of the Megalonyx and other extinct genera of quadrupeds.

This ancient relic of our species is that of a young man of about sixteen years of age, as determined by its size and form, and by the fact that the epiphyses have separated from the tuberosity of the ischium and from the crista of the ilium. Nearly all the os pubis is wanting, the upper posterior part of the ilium is broken away, and but half the acetabulum remains. That this bone is strictly in the fossil state is manifest from its physical characters, in which it accords in every respect of colour, density, &c. &c. with those of the Megalonyx and other associated bones. That it could not have drifted into the position in which it was found is manifest from several facts:—1. that the plateau of blue clay is not appreciably acted on by those causes that produce ravines in the superincumbent diluvial; 2. that the human bone was found at least two feet below three associated skeletons of the Megalonyx, all which, judging from the apposition or proximity of their several parts, had been quietly deposited in this locality, independently of any active current or other displacing power; and lastly, because there was no admixture of diluvial drift with the blue clay, which latter retains its homogeneous character equally in the higher part that furnished the extinct quadrupeds, and in its lower part that contained the remains of man. Dr. Dickeson has announced his intention of returning, at an early period of the present autumn, to resume his explorations in this prolific and most interesting locality; and it is earnestly hoped that his researches may lead to a further elucidation of this important question in science.

On the Mechanism which closes the Membranous Wings of the genus Locusta. By Joseph Leidy, M.D.

The membranous wings or alæ of the locusts while at rest are folded up, like a closed fan, beneath the anterior pergamentaceous wings. These are opened or expanded by the contraction of appropriate muscles (extensores alæ) contained within the thorax, the tendons of which are inserted into the ribs or longitudinal veins at the root of the wings. When one of the wings is separated from the body of the insect and stretched open by the fingers, upon letting go it will be found instantly to close or resume the position of rest.

The mechanism which produces this closure in the separated wing, as well as when attached to the living animal, I find to be spiral ligamentous bands, wound, like the thread of a screw, around the transverse or connecting veins, which latter are also flexible. By this arrangement, upon the contraction of the alary extensors, the